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THE
THIRD COMMANDMENT.

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTIES OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF ARTS, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE,
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY (DEPARTMENT OF SEMITIC LAN-
GUAGES AND LITERATURE).

BY

FULTON JOHNSON COFFIN.



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VITA.

I, Fulton Johnson Coffin, was born in the Province of Prince Edward Island, Dominion of Canada, on the 25th of July, 1864.

My early education was received in the public schools of my native place and by private instruction. In 1878 I entered the Prince of Wales College, where I remained for three years in preparation for the University. In October, 1882, I matriculated at Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S., from which I graduated as B.A. in 1886, with Honors in the departments of History and English Literature.

During the session 1886-7 I studied theology at the Presbyterian College, Halifax, N.S., and during the years 1887-9 continued my studies in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N.J. In 1889 I also received the degree of M.A. from Princeton College, by examination in the department of Philosophy.

During the years 1890-3 I was connected with the Canadian Presbyterian Missions in Trinidad, B. W. Indies, as instructor in Biblical History and Theology in the College of that Mission.

From 1894-8 I was Fellow in the Department of Comparative Religion in the University of Chicago. During these years I devoted my attention especially to the study of Comparative Religion, Ancient History, and Old Testament Language and Literature.

In the Prince of Wales College I studied under Drs. Anderson, Alexander, and others; in Dalhousie University my chief instructors were President Forrest, Professors Alexander (now of Toronto University) and Schurman (now President Schurman of Cornell University); in Princeton, President McCosh, Professors Green, Hodge, Patton, Warfield, Orris, and others; in the University of Chicago, President William R. Harper and Professor G. S. Goodspeed. To all whom I have named, I owe sincere gratitude for their kindness and helpfulness; but very especially do I feel indebted to Professor Goodspeed for his deep interest and assistance, and to President Harper for direction and counsel and many acts of helpfulness during my residence in the University.

The Third Commandment.

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I.

The History of Interpretation. — The most important renderings of the third commandment in ancient and in modern times are as follows :

Septuagint : οὐ λήμψῃ τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου ἐπὶ ματαίῳ. οὐ γὰρ μὴ καθαρίσῃ Κύριος ὁ θεός σου τὸν λαμβάνοντα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ ματαίῳ. Origen : ἐπὶ ματαίῳ (*temere*). Aquila : εἰς εἰκῇ.

Graecus Venetus : οὐκ ἄρεις τοῦνομα τοῦ ὄντωτοῦ του θεοῦ σοῦ εἰς τὸ ψεῦδος· οὐ γὰρ ἀθώῳσει ὁ ὄντωτῆς ὅς ἂν ἄροι τοῦνομά οἱ εἰς τὸ ψεῦδος.

Syriac (Latin translation, Walton's Polyglott) : *Ne jures per nomen Domini Dei tui cum mendacio ; quia non justificat Dominus eum qui jurat per nomen suum cum mendacio.*

Samaritan (Latin translation, Walton's Polyglott) : *Non accipies nomen Dei tui in vanum, non enim impunem dimittet Dominus eum qui acceperit nomen ejus in vanum.*

Arabic (Latin translation, Walton's Polyglott) : *Ne jures per nomen Dei Domini tui falso, quoniam Deus non justificat eum qui jurat per nomen ejus falso.*

Vulgate (Jerome) : *Non assumes nomen Domini Dei tui in vanum, nec enim habebit insontem Dominus eum qui assumpserit nomen Domini Dei sui frustra.*

Targum Onkelos¹ : לֹא תִימַי יַת שְׁמָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵי לְמַנָּא אֶרִי לֹא יוֹכִי יַת דִּימֵי בְּשִׁמְיָהּ לְשַׁקְרָא :

Jerusalem Targum (Etheridge's translation, p. 485) : "Sons of Israel, my people, no one of you shall swear by the name of the word of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord in the day of the great judgment will not acquit anyone who shall swear by His name in vain."

¹ The Targum Onkelos translates לְשִׁינָא in first clause by לְמַנָּא = 'in vain'; in second clause by לְשַׁקְרָא = 'for falsehood.'

Philo seems to refer the third commandment to false swearing. He urges men to be slow to take an oath; but, if necessary, then to swear truthfully. Thoughtless and profane oaths are likewise to be avoided. (See Yonge's translation, Vol. III. p. 155 ff.)

Josephus makes the commandment refer to the oath. We are not to swear by God in a false manner; but thoughtless oaths are also to be avoided. . . . ὁ τρίτος δ' ἐπὶ μηδενὶ φαύλῳ τὸν θεὸν ὀμνῆναι. . . . (See *Antiquities*, Bk. III. 5.)

The Talmudists seem to refer this commandment both to false swearing and to profane swearing. According to *Berakoth*, I. 19, the taking of the divine name in vain is forbidden; while in other references the prohibition of false swearing is associated with this commandment. In the Jerusalem Talmud, in the treatise *Shebuoth*, both false oaths and adjurations are brought under the prohibition of this commandment, all such being regarded as sinful because a profaning of the divine name. The interpretation of Ex. 20⁷ is made to refer to lying oaths, while Deut. 5¹¹ is directed against swearing in vain. (See *Nedarim*, 3, 8; *Rabba* on Exodus, chap. 28.)

Barnabas says οὐ μὴ λάβῃς ἐπὶ ματαίῳ τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου (Barnabas 19^b). The same interpretation is followed by the other Apostolic Fathers.

In Wycliffe's Bible the following translation is given: "Thou schalt not take in veyn the name of the Lord God, for the Lord schal not have him guiltless that taketh in veyn the name of His Lord God." This translation is followed by Coverdale, Cranmer, the Bishops' Bible, and Thomas Mathewe (1549), and is retained in our authorized and revised versions. The revisers, however, as well as the editors of the new Variorum edition, give as a marginal reading "for falsehood."

Luther translates: *Du sollst den Namen des Herrn deines Gottes nicht missbrauchen; denn der Herr wird den nicht ungestraft lassen der seinen Namen missbraucht.*

De Wette translates: *Du sollst den Namen Jehovas deines Gottes nicht aussprechen zur Unwahrheit; denn nicht ungestraft wird Jehova den lassen der seinen Namen ausspricht zur Unwahrheit.*

Kautzsch renders: *Du sollst den Namen Jahwes, deines Gottes, nicht freventlich aussprechen; denn Jahwe lässt den nicht ungestraft, der seinen Namen freventlich ausspricht.*

Calvin makes the third commandment refer chiefly to false swearing, but also to all occasions when the divine name is mentioned. Accordingly, the prohibition is directed against any light or frivolous use of the name of God, as well as against false swearing. אֱלֹהִים he

takes as meaning for falsehood, but a better rendering, he thinks, is to make it equivalent to **נָפַח** (*frustra*) = "in vain." (See *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, Vol. II. p. 408.)

Kalisch (*Com. in loc.*) translates **לִשְׁוֹרָא** "for falsehood," and makes the commandment a prohibition of false swearing. (Compare Gesenius's lexicon, 12th ed.)

Dillmann (*Com. in loc.*) regards the prohibition as directed against any sinful or unnecessary use of the divine name, as false swearing, profanity, etc.

Lange (*Com. in loc.*) makes the commandment a prohibition of the malicious use of the divine name. "The right apprehension of the name is presupposed, but the correctness of the apprehension is hypocritically employed by the transgressor in the interest of selfishness and vice."

From the above survey we are able to give a summary of the history of interpretation. There are no variations in the Hebrew text of the commandment, but various renderings are disclosed, which result from different interpretations of the Hebrew word **לִשְׁוֹרָא**. The various interpretations we may classify as follows:

1. An interpretation is given which makes the commandment a prohibition of the use of the divine name for a bad or malicious purpose. Compare the word in Arabic from apparently the same root. (*šā'a* = **شَاءَ** 'to be bad.'). (Eth. *sa'a* = 'crime.'). This is the rendering of Kautzsch in his *Alt.-Test.*, *in loc.*, and Lange (*Com. in loc.*) seems to take this interpretation of the passage.

2. In the second division may be classified those interpretations which give the meaning of **לִשְׁוֹרָא** as 'in vain, thoughtlessly, profanely,' viz. The Septuagint and other early Greek versions, Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate (Jerome), Barnabas, and the other Apostolic Fathers, early English versions, authorized and revised versions, etc.

3. In the third division we comprehend those who interpret **לִשְׁוֹרָא** by 'falsely or for falsehood,' including those who make it a specific command against perjury or false swearing, viz. Graecus Venetus, Syriac version, Targum, Arabic version, De Wette, Kalisch, etc.

4. Some interpret **לִשְׁוֹרָא** as including both 2 and 3, viz., the Talmud, Philo, Josephus, Luther, Calvin, Strack, Dillmann, and others.

II.

An inductive study of the word **לִשְׁוֹרָא.**—The word occurs in the following passages in the Old Testament:

1. Ex. 23¹: "Thou shalt not raise a false report." Here the prohibition is clearly directed against not merely an empty report, but one with evil intent. Dillmann says "a harmful report" (*Com. in loc.*). This is clearly what gives point to the prohibition. It is not mere inadvertence, or even thoughtless repetition, but wilful intention to harm.

2. Deut. 5^{17[20]}}: This is parallel to Ex. 20¹⁶, where we read יָד שֶׁקֶר for שֶׁקֶר דָּבָר of this verse. This would seem to indicate the meaning of שֶׁקֶר as 'falsehood' in our ordinary sense of the word. (See Driver, *Inter. Crit. Com. in loc.*)

3. In the Book of Job, the word שֶׁמֶת seems to have a like significance. Job 7³, "mouths of vanity," clearly signifies mouths of nothingness or emptiness. (So Delitzsch *in loc.*) So also 11¹¹, "For he knoweth vain men," clearly means 'men of impiety' (compare Ps. 26⁴), *i.e.* 'men devoid of principle,' or 'empty' in the moral sense. The meaning is the same in 15³¹, where in the first clause שֶׁמֶת means 'waste' or 'empty in mind'; in the second, 'empty in fortune' (compare Hos. 12^{1c[11]}, and see Davidson and Delitzsch *in loc.*). In 31⁵, "If I have walked with vanity," the idea seems to be 'emptiness under a concealing mask, falsehood,' in the sense of 'hypocritical pretence.' So also 35¹³, "surely God will not hear vanity," *i.e.* 'emptiness,' in the sense that God will not hear mere motion of the lips, which is lacking in the essentials of true prayer.

4. The significance of שֶׁמֶת in the Psalms is similar to that in Job. See Ps. 12³, "They speak vanity one with another," *i.e.* they speak deceitful, hypocritical, empty words under a disguise that conceals their true nature. (See Delitzsch *in loc.*) The same idea is present in 41⁷ 144^{8,11}. Ps. 26⁴, "I have not sat with vain persons" (compare Jer. 15¹⁷, Job 11¹¹, *etc.*), *i.e.* with 'unreal men, men of emptiness,' as opposed to those who are filled with the fulness of God, and hence are morally good (see Delitzsch *in loc.*). The phrase "lying vanities" (הַבִּלְבָּלִים) in 31⁷ is similar in meaning. The reference is evidently to false gods, *i.e.* beings that have no reality (see Cheyne, *Com. in loc.*, and Hitzig *in loc.*). The same idea is found in 89^{48[47]} 127^{1,2}. (See Delitzsch, De Wette, Hupfeld, *etc.*, *in loc.*)

5. In Prov. 30⁸ שֶׁמֶת has the same significance as in Job or Psalms, *viz.*, 'emptiness, unreality.'

6. Is. 1¹³, "vain oblations," *i.e.* 'hypocritical offerings, such as have nothing behind them corresponding to what they pretend to express.' (See Cheyne and Delitzsch *in loc.*) Dillmann says "the meal offering of emptiness," *i.e.* lacking in moral dedication.

Is. 30²⁸, "to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity." Cheyne says, "in the fan of nothingness," *i.e.* 'reduce them to nothingness.' שְׁוֵא is defect of being, and the doom here is that which corresponds to such worthlessness. (See Delitzsch *in loc.*)

Is. 59⁴, "and speak lies," *i.e.* 'emptiness, that which is wanting in moral content.' Delitzsch says, "that which is morally empty and worthless."

7. Lam. 2¹⁴: the idea is similar to Isa. 59⁴.

8. Ez. 12²⁴, "vain vision," *i.e.* 'unreal vision, one which has no reality in it, a vision of emptiness.' The same idea is present in all the references found in Ezekiel. Compare Ez. 13^{6, 7, 8, 9, 23} 21^{28, 34} 22²⁸.

9. Hos. 10⁴: "They have spoken words, swearing falsely, in making a covenant." Nowack says, "a false oath, in the sense of one with a mental reservation." Their action is hypocritical, for they do not regard Yahweh, but while professing to do so, their own interest is alone at heart. As they do not regard with undivided attention the worship of Yahweh, their oaths cannot be true oaths, for they are lacking in the quality essential to the taking of such oaths. The reference here is rather to the heart of the swearer than to the matter of words.

Hos. 12^{12[11]}: Cheyne translates "If Gilead is (given to) idolatry, mere vanity shall they (the Gileadites) become." Gilead being moral nothingness, she also shall become physical nothingness (see Nowack *in loc.*).

10. Jon. 2⁹: "Lying vanities" (הַבְּלִי-שְׁוֵא) (lit. 'breaths of vanity'). This is a strong expression, similar in meaning to the preceding passages.

11. Mal. 3¹⁴: "It is vain to serve God." The meaning here is clearly not that it is false or bad to serve Jehovah, but that it is nothingness. It is vanity, *i.e.* empty; there is no reality in it.

Owing to the few instances in which the word שְׁוֵא occurs in the preëxilic literature of the Old Testament, and its complete absence in early passages, it is difficult to make definite statements in regard to the history of the word. From a careful consideration of the passages, however, it seems manifest that the word has a history in Old Testament literature, and that we can distinguish in a general way an earlier and a later signification.

1. In most preëxilic passages שְׁוֵא has the meaning of 'falsity,' but always implying evil intent. This is evident in Ex. 23¹ and Deut. 5^{17[20]}. It is the meaning also which is suggested by words from the

same root in the cognate languages. In such passages as Hos. 10⁴ Is. 1¹⁸ the same idea of evil intent is present, but refers to evil intent of the heart rather than to expression in outward word or act. The other passages imply falsehood in a more objective sense; here it is rather subjective, *i.e.* 'hypocrisy' and 'falsity of character.'

2. In all exilic and post-exilic passages the word שׁוֹרֵץ has lost its earlier significance, and means 'false' rather in the sense of 'unreal in nature, empty, vain.' Hence any use of the divine name in this way corresponds to the idea of profanity as found in the exilic and later literature of the Old Testament.

3. The word שׁוֹרֵץ in connection with witness-bearing clearly has the signification of falsehood. (See Deut. 5^{17[20]} Hos. 10⁴.)

III.

Conceptions of the Divine Name among Primitive Peoples.—Writers² on the early history of mankind have noted that among primitive peoples subjective and objective relations are usually confused. The conception prevails—apparently universally—that there is a very real connection between an object and its image. Peoples in a more advanced stage of civilization, governed by more scientific principles, easily realize this to be only a subjective relationship; but to primitive man it appeared to have all the substance of reality. This conception is the fundamental thought which rules in all processes that may be termed magical, and explains the mental misconception on which all early philosophy is based, *viz.*, a wrong induction, which gives as real causes only such as exist in the imagination, or from association of ideas argues to a connection in external fact.

A significant illustration of this is seen in the use of the name. The mental image of an object and the name come together in the mind, and so a real connection is thought to exist between them. The uttering of a word has an influence on the object for which it stands. As a consequence of this, the possession of a name is regarded as the medium through which good or bad influences may be exerted. This is not viewed as mere symbolism, but is thought of as a real process; for the name is considered to be a real part of the being for which it stands. So among many peoples under primitive conditions there is a strong disposition not to allow their names

² Among others, Mannhart, *Zauberglaube*; Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 111 ff.; Renouvier, *Phil. Analytiques*, Tom. I. 1 ff.; Jevons, *Introduction to History of Religion*; Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, p. 93 ff.

to be known. This is especially true where magical processes are practised. This conception, indeed, seems to be universal among primitive peoples, and has survived to our own day among many backward races.

In the light of the foregoing facts, we can easily understand how the conception of the importance of the name could be transferred to man's relationship with superior powers, and how the knowledge of the name of a spirit or god would give the possessor of that name a means of direct communication with the deity, and enable him to secure its services for his own needs and purposes. That such was a common conception the following investigation will disclose.

In connection with what has been stated, it is necessary to note that in the early phases of the religion of the world each deity has his own peculiar circle of worshippers, to whom alone his name is a valued possession; for to such only as are in covenant relations with him is the knowledge of his name of any utility. In the course of the development of primitive religions there arises a distinction between those supernatural beings which come to be regarded as great gods and other spiritual beings which do not rise to the rank of deities. Spirits, originally good or evil, gradually become further differentiated, the good spirits rising to the rank of deities, while the evil spirits remain mere spirits, and are regarded as the special enemies of man — malignant beings, who may be invoked to work mischief against the good and upright. The good gods are now looked upon as beneficent beings, friendly to man, ready to protect their worshippers and to uphold the cause of the upright. Religion becomes more and more confined to the worship of such deities, while the worship of malignant spirits is regarded as disloyal and impious. The power of these spirits of darkness is not denied, but it becomes a mark of great degeneracy to owe allegiance to them, or to make use of their power for any personal or malicious purpose.

Thus, in regard to the use of the divine name there arises a conflict in most religions as they develop into a higher stage. The invoking of the name of malicious spirits is condemned as disloyal to the gods. On the other hand, the use of the name of a god, as before stated, is permitted, and is regarded by the worshipper as the medium of seeking those things which are in accord with his will.

Among the primitive peoples of India³ we have many illustrations of the use and significance of the name. According to their concep-

³ See Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folklore of North India*, p. 99 ff.

tion, in order to appease the wrath of some malicious power, which has been the cause of affliction, misfortune, or sickness, the first step is to determine the name of the god or spirit that requires to be appeased. This is done in various ways, simple and crude, but revealing a well-defined conception of the use of the name. The dropping of oil in water is a favorite method. As the oil is dropped the supposed deity is named. If the oil forms one globule, the proper deity has been named; if otherwise, another name is tried, until the proper decision is reached.

Many instances occur where the name of the afflicted person is changed, or some other subterfuge is resorted to in order to deceive the spirits of evil and escape their assaults. If one has lost a child by death, supposed to have been caused by malicious spirits, the next child born in the family is given an opprobrious name, so that the demons may be terrified. For the same reason, nicknames are given with the conception that thereby the mischief-maker is prevented, through ignorance of the real name, from acquiring control over the owner. Among the masses of the Hindu population similar ideas are prevalent, although the unwillingness to mention the name has, in most cases, lost its original significance. It is well known that the Hindu, or even the Mohammedan, of India considers it very improper to mention a wife's name, much more so for the wife to utter the name of her husband. Similar conceptions⁴ prevail among the negroes of Africa, the natives of Abyssinia, the aborigines of Australia, and other primitive peoples.

Among all such primitive peoples there is a distinction drawn between the mere magician or sorcerer and the authorized priest, and religion is already separated from mere occult arts. The magicians work not by acknowledged powers; their practices, therefore, are proscribed, not perhaps so much because they are wrong in themselves, but because they manifest disloyalty to the sanctioned worship and the acknowledged method of procedure.

The Aryan faiths of India entertained similar conceptions in regard to the name. The *Atharva Veda*, which preserves for us the lowest, but, probably, the most popular side of the Vedic religion, deals especially with matters of magical import, and several passages⁵ have reference to the use of the name.

⁴ See Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, p. 248 ff.; Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, Vol. I. p. 242; Burton, *Dahomé*, Vol. II. p. 284; Parkyns, *Abyssinia*, Vol. II. p. 145, etc.

⁵ *Atharva Veda*, V. 5; XIX. 35; VI. 44; XIX. 39.

When the old Vedic faith had developed into ritualistic Brahmanism⁶ the correct knowledge of the sacrificial formula was all-important, and had power, in connection with the sacrifice, to bend the gods to one's will. The mystic syllable *Om* has never lost its efficacy throughout the whole course of the development of Indian religions. The highest merit and greatest utility to the worshipper result from the faithful use of this sacred syllable, which is thought to be identical with the highest Brahma.

Modern Hinduism has similar conceptions, as is seen in the importance attached to the ceremony of giving a name to a newborn child. The future career of the individual may be greatly affected by the choice of a happy or auspicious name. A secret name is often given, which is considered the real name and is not made public, in order that the possessor may be protected against all those who may desire to injure him by their enchantments.⁷ The continued and rapid repetition of the names of the gods is considered of great merit. The name of Rama is especially common in such invocations, and is heard from the lips of Hindus at all times of special need or solemnity.

The Laws of Manu, the great embodiment of Hindu law, contain several passages⁸ which disclose such conceptions. "Sorcery by means of sacrifice, and working magic by means of roots, are strictly forbidden." "Those who live by teaching the performance of auspicious ceremonies . . . fortune-telling, are punishable." "For all incantations intended to destroy life, for magic rites with roots (practised by persons) not related to him against whom they are directed, and for various kinds of sorcery, a fine . . . shall be inflicted."

There is a lawful use of such power, however, placed in the hands of the Brahmans. "The Brahman may punish his foes by his own power alone. Let him use without hesitation the sacred texts revealed by Atharvan and Angiras : speech, indeed, is the weapon of Brahmans ; with that he may slay his enemies."

The texts of the *Atharva Veda*, we know, were largely used for the purpose of counteracting the work of evil demons, for healing the sick, and for the general benefit and protection of the worshipper. This is evidence of the lawful and permitted use of the divine name by properly authorized persons.

⁶ See "Institutes of Vishnu," *Sac. Bks. of the East*, Vol. VII., XXX. 33; LV. 9-21; XCVIII. 6.

⁷ See Sir Monier Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, pp. 372, 358.

⁸ Laws of Manu, XI. 64; IX. 2, 290; XI. 31-34.

From the inner character of Persian Zoroastrianism we can understand what a place such conceptions of the name must have had in it. As it comes before us in the Zend-Avesta it is no longer a primitive faith, but the most fully developed, in many respects, of all the Oriental religions. The dualism which characterizes it manifests itself in reference to the use of the name, and the power attached to words⁹ is freely acknowledged.

In the *Ormazd Yast* we are told that the recitation of the names of Ahura Mazda is the best defence against all dangers.¹⁰ "Zarathustra asked Ahura Mazda what of the Holy Word is the strongest, most glorious, most effective, fiend-smiting, best healing, what destroyeth the malice of *dævas* and men? Ahura Mazda answered, 'Our name—that is the strongest, most victorious, most glorious, most effective, most fiend-smiting.' Reveal unto me that name of thine, O Ahura Mazda!" Then follow the twenty names, the recitation of which brings victory. The legitimate uses of the name are plainly seen, *viz.*, to destroy the malice of *dævas*, to secure the personal safety of the true worshipper, and to keep in subjection the great enemy of purity and light, Angru Mainyu.¹¹

The old Babylonian religion was a spirit-worship of the most primitive form. It furnishes us with illustrations of the conception of the name, especially in magical texts and conjuration formulæ. The exorcisms are addressed most frequently to a beneficent deity, such as Marduk, who acts as mediator with his father Ea, who is regarded as the source of highest intelligence. Man, in his struggle with malignant spirits, makes appeal to some beneficent power, spirit or god. In the more developed stage of the Babylonian religion, when there exists a fully grown pantheon of gods, the medium of approach to these is through the personal name of the deity invoked. The knowledge of the name secures the assistance of the god, while ignorance of it prevents the granting of the required assistance. The impression seems to have existed that there was a power able to repel all hostile attacks, if only its name could be secured. Ea alone knows the all-powerful name; and his son Marduk (earlier Silik-mulu-dug), who acts as mediator, is besought by the worshipper to request his father's assistance in time of need. There is clearly emphasized a distinction between the lawful and unlawful use of the name. The supernatural power by which man can avert the malicious attacks of hostile powers is lawfully employed in the use of

⁹ See *Vendidad*, X., XI.

¹⁰ See *SBE*. Vol. XXIII. p. 21.

¹¹ *SBE*. Vol. IV. *Fargard*, x., xi.; Vol. XXIII. pp. 74, 138, 168, 260 ff.

the name of the beneficent god to avert evil, to benefit the worshipper, and to subdue the demons; while, if employed for an opposite purpose, it degenerates into pernicious and impious practices—mere sorcery and witchcraft, with all the stream of evils which flow from them. This latter use is sternly condemned, clearly showing that in the Babylonian religion, throughout its entire history, the distinction between the lawful and the unlawful use of the divine name was recognized.¹²

According to Egyptian psychology, the name constituted an essential element of man's complex nature, and the calling upon the name was possessed of a powerful influence. This is in harmony with the common Oriental conception of the power of the human voice. If an influence is to be exerted on man or on god, it is accomplished most readily and effectually by a knowledge of the name. Egyptian religious texts furnish many striking illustrations of this idea. A peculiarity is seen in the use of apparently meaningless phrases,¹³ which are thought to possess peculiar significance. The *Harris Papyrus Magique* furnishes a list of such words and phrases.¹⁴ Many of the sacred texts show how much depended on a correct knowledge of the name. Isis did not know the secret name of Ra, and this impaired her power. Ra kept secret the special name on which his power was based. "Tell me thy name, divine father, for that man lives who is called by his name." Most suggestive are the examples in the Book of the Dead, especially concerning the identification of the dead with Osiris. By calling the dead man Osiris, the name secures to the deceased the same victory over death and identity of experience with the god.

Chabas has shown¹⁵ that such arts were not always confined to funereal or preservative rites, but were used also for selfish and vicious purposes and for the gratification of human passions. An interesting copy is given of an accusation and condemnation to death for such uses of magical power in the time of Rameses III. (p. 170). From

¹² See the following references, as the basis of the statement regarding the Babylonian idea of the use and abuse of the name: Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, pp. 19, 28, 43, 72, 108; *Records of the Past* (First Series), Vol. I. p. 147; Vol. III. p. 147; Vol. IX. p. 143 ff.; (Second Series), Vol. V. p. 134; Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures* (1887), pp. 303-4; King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*, p. 27, l. 33; p. 43, l. 14 ff.; p. 46, l. 8; p. 63, l. 89; p. 76, l. 13 f.; p. 84, l. 10; p. 93, l. 14; Tallquist, *Assyr. Beschwörung Maglû*, p. 43, l. 19; p. 49, l. 125; p. 53, l. 191, etc.

¹³ These are probably corruptions of some primitive language forgotten in later times.

¹⁴ See pp. 146, 151.

¹⁵ See p. 169 ff.

this it is evident that the magical books belonged exclusively to the king, and were lawfully consulted only on special occasions by the proper royal priests or *savants* who were the court advisers of the king.

Here, as among other early people, the lawful use of the name is clearly differentiated from all false and selfish uses.¹⁶

IV.

The Name of Yahweh (שם יהוה).—Having considered the significance of the name among early peoples, we now pass to a treatment of the phrase שם יהוה as found in the Old Testament and its bearing on the interpretation of the third commandment.

1. The section in the Book of the Covenant, Ex. 20²²⁻²⁴, is an amplification of the thought of commandments one to three of the Decalogue. This we take as the point of departure in the following discussion. The worship of one God by Israel is here implied; and simplicity in that worship is enjoined, as is shown in the restrictions regarding the altar, and the prohibition of any attempt to represent Yahweh by visible forms, while v.^{24b}, "in any place where I record my name,"¹⁷ implies a right and proper use of the name of Yahweh, and consequent blessings to those who so use it. (Compare Ex. 23^{13b}.)

Here we have clearly expressed the fundamental truths upon which the Hebrew religion is based, truths which in course of time were destined to transform and elevate the thought of Israel into pure, untrammelled monotheism. One God for Israel means that as history unfolds there is to come the full recognition that there is one God only for the world. No idol-worship and simplicity in service are requirements that cut short any development in the direction of naturalism or mere materialism, while the use of the divine name is

¹⁶ See Budge, *Book of the Dead*, pp. lix., 249 (*Papyrus of Ani*), pp. 254, 274, 276, 288, 299; Maspero, *Bibliothèque Egyptologique*, I. 93 and II. 373; Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 265 ff.; Chabas, *Harris Papyrus Magique*, pp. 140, 145 f., "Thy name is more powerful than the gods" (*Litanies of Shu*, Chabas, p. 140); Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures* (1879), p. 184; *Book of the Dead*, according to Budge, as above, p. 249, "May my name be proclaimed when it is found upon the boards of the table-offering"; p. 274, "Osiris . . . knoweth thy name . . . is known unto you, and he knoweth your names"; p. 276, the dead says, "I know your names and I know the name of the great god."

¹⁷ אֶפְסֹר is best translated as a permissive *Hiphil*, "in every place where I permit mention of my name."

permitted as the medium through which a fuller knowledge of the divine character may be given.

Interpreting in the light of our study of primitive conceptions, we understand the name as the manward side of the Divine Being, the medium of access to the divine presence, and the source of blessing to the worshipper. No other conception of early man was so well adapted to be the medium through which higher and more spiritual ideas of the divine nature could be conveyed.

Calling upon the name of a god implies allegiance to that god, trust and faith in his power. If Israel was to grow more loyal to Yahweh, it was only to be realized by the sole invoking of his name in time of need.¹⁸

All advance in religious knowledge, and consequently in spiritual power, is the result of a fuller knowledge of the name of God which, in other words, is the revelation of His character.¹⁹ The proclamation of the name of Yahweh at Sinai (see Ex. 34⁵⁻⁷[JE]) is the culmination of the revelation to Israel in this early period, and in this revelation we have a basis for a true spiritual relationship between Yahweh and His people. The thought is often expressed that the revelation of the divine character, through the filling out of the significance of the name, brings not only increase of privileges to His people, but denotes their close relationship to Him, and inspires confidence and trust in the hearts of His true worshippers.²⁰

If we compare the thought of this early period of the Hebrew religion with that of other peoples in regard to the name, we cannot but realize that there is a great similarity in the forms of expression, while among the Hebrews a distinctly spiritual conception is present which is lacking in other faiths. It is this element which differentiates Hebrew thought from that of other early peoples.

2. In the period which is best represented by the law of Deuteronomy²¹ the use of the divine name in worship is especially emphasized, and a growth in spirituality of conception is manifest. Emphasis is placed on the superiority of Israel over other peoples, in the fact that they are permitted to rejoice before God because of the

¹⁸ Gen. 4²⁶ 12⁸ 13⁴.¹⁸ Compare with Ex. 20²⁴. Here the name Yahweh is used. This is the conception of the writer, who uses the language of his own times.

¹⁹ See Gen. 16¹³. Compare Ex. 3¹³. 14. 15.

²⁰ See Josh. 7⁹ 9⁹ 23⁷ (compare Ex. 23¹⁸) 1 Sam. 17⁴⁵ Is. 12⁴ Amos 27 5⁸ 6¹⁰ 9⁶. 12.

²¹ Deuteronomy was, we take it, the Book of the Law discovered in the time of Josiah, 621 B.C.

manifestation of His name (Deut. 4⁷). The blessedness of coming to His one central sanctuary is that He has set His name there, and that He has so manifested Himself that they may rejoice before Him (see Deut. 14²⁴ 16^{2, 6, 11}). The name is taken as the expression of His nature and character; and His revealed name is associated with His people Israel and with His sanctuary in their midst. Their meeting with Him is more than a meeting with a tribal god, and the basis of their joy is the knowledge of Himself as revealed in His name.

The relation of Yahweh to those called by His name — those to whom He stands in the relation of owner and protector — has now, aided by the increased spirituality of the prophetic age,²² passed into a purely spiritual conception.

In this age prophecy reaches its climax. The work of the prophet is done in the name of Yahweh. He takes the place in Israel of those men among other peoples who endeavored to make known the mysteries of the unseen. In Him and in His work is seen the highest development of the use of the divine name (see Deut. 18^{15, 19}).

3. The Hebrew literature which comes from the exilic age gives us a highly spiritual conception of God. Pure monotheism prevails, and the divine nature is regarded as essentially transcendent. The holiness of the divine name is especially emphasized; and so, likewise, the sin of profaning the name is emphatically condemned. The Levitical law also emphasizes very pointedly the holiness and transcendent character of God.²³ According to this law, as according to the prophets of this period, any act or word which seems to have the appearance of profanity is to be carefully avoided. In this age the third commandment would seem to have a direct application to the sin of profanity, or to any frivolous use of the divine name.²⁴

4. In the post-exilic prophets and in the later historical books²⁵ the holiness of the divine nature continues to be emphasized and the sin of profanity to be condemned. Any word or deed that seems to detract from the glory due to God or to manifest a disposition to deprive Him of the honor rightly belonging to Him, is deprecated. Since Israel is His people, any act that tends to minimize His exalted

²² Mic. 4⁵ Deut. 28¹⁰ *etc.*

²³ See especially the Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26), which is generally believed to have been completed in this age.

²⁴ See Is. 43^{7, 25} 48^{9, 11} 57¹⁵ Ez. 20^{9, 14, 22} 39^{7, 25} 43⁷.

²⁵ See Mal. 1^{6, 11, 12, 14} 2^{2, 10, 11} 4² 1 Chron. 13⁶ 15² 2 Chron. 36¹³ Dan. 9¹⁹ (*cf.* Neh. 9⁵) Neh. 13²⁵.

character as their God is profanity. Clear evidence of the growing sanctity of the divine name is manifest in the increasing tendency to drop the name יהוה and to use in its place שם or אלהים.

V.

The Use and Abuse of the Divine Name in the Old Testament. —

We have seen already that early peoples in general had the conception of a proper use of the names of their gods, while they condemned the abuse or malicious use of these names as well as all practices of a merely magical nature which implied connection with or allegiance to spirits or powers other than the accepted deities.

Of the early religious ideas of the Hebrews we have no full record, and even the literature that treats of the most ancient period must be colored in some measure by the ideas of the later time in which it took its present form. However, we have, from a very early time, distinct intimations of the attitude of the Hebrew religion to the subject under discussion. The Book of the Covenant (Ex. 22¹⁸) condemns to death the sorceress, which clearly indicates the attitude of this early code. Why the prohibition is not fuller we cannot state with any certainty. It would seem probable, however, from this stern prohibition, that among the Hebrews, as among other primitive peoples, women were most addicted to magic, or were most feared because of their supposed influence with the powers of evil. It may also have been, as has frequently been observed in modern times among races emerging from a low stage of culture to a more advanced stage, that, owing to the inferior position of woman, she may have held with more tenacious grasp conceptions which came down from earlier and less enlightened times. According to 1 Sam. 28³, however, Saul is represented as "putting away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land," although a little later it was to the witch of Endor that he went in the hour of despondency (v.^{7 ff.}). From this it is evident that all persons engaging in such practices were regarded as guilty, and that the prohibition of the Book of the Covenant was directed against magic in general, female offenders being singled out only because they were the most prominent offenders.

The frequent condemnation²⁶ of such arts in the early literature of the Hebrews is sufficient evidence that they were common. There is no thought of doubting their reality or their potency. As we have

²⁶ See Micah 5¹² Is. 2⁶ 3^{2, 3} 8¹⁹. 20 19³ 29⁴ etc.

seen already, the proper use of the divine name, in accordance with primitive conceptions, is not wanting. This is the privilege of the true worshipper, who in this way has access to God. The name is also the medium through which a fuller knowledge of the divine nature is transmitted and God's power made available in blessing His people.

Several incidents in early Hebrew history illustrate a use of the divine name which retains largely, in external form, the significance of the name found among other peoples.

The work of the seer, for instance, in early Israel is akin to that of the seer and the soothsayer among other peoples, but he is not condemned, for he speaks in the name of Yahweh and under His direction and guidance.²⁷ Here we see that higher religion does not abandon primitive forms, but gradually transforms them in accordance with its own spirit.

The Balaam stories (Num. 22-24) are suggestive. Balak sends for Balaam with rewards of divination in order to secure his aid in cursing Israel. The whole account is a picture of primitive ideas of divination. Balaam builds seven altars and offers sacrifice thereon. But, as the account comes to us from the prophetic writer, he can speak only as he is permitted, *viz.* to bless Yahweh's people and to utter words necessary for the strengthening of His people.

The contest on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 K. 18^{17 ff.}) is also suggestive. Both call on the name of their god. On the part of the Baal worshippers there is a full exhibition of primitive conceptions. Elijah uses forms similar, but purged of their grossness by the spiritual conceptions of the Hebrew faith.²⁸

Passing on to the century preceding Josiah's reforms, we find that Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah have outgrown earlier conceptions. They speak in the name of Yahweh, but their work is characterized by a high and pure spirituality. They have reached an altitude where forms, although not entirely outgrown, have lost much of their original meaning. That this is true is evidenced by such passages as Is. 3^{2, 3}. Here, prophet, judge, and diviner are associated, as acknowledged elements in the life of the people.²⁹ "Prophet and soothsayer are classed together. . . . It does not appear that the prophets denied the reality of magical powers, though they did assert that the use of them without the direction and assistance of Jehovah was

²⁷ See Judges 4^{4 ff.} 1 Sam. 9.

²⁸ Compare 2 K. 5, where is brought out the Syrian idea of the use of name (v.¹¹).

²⁹ Compare Micah 3^{6, 7}.

an act of rebellion against the God of gods" (Cheyne, *Com. in loc.*). The priestly divination by lot is not condemned in the Biblical narrative. "Urim and Thummim" were, probably, simply two stones put into the pocket beneath the breastplate of the high priest's ephod, which indicated "yes" and "no" respectively. Whichever stone was drawn was taken as the divine decision. The drawing of the sacred lot continued down to late times, and seems clearly to have originated in the use of the divine name for a good or beneficial purpose.

The passage in Deut. 18¹⁰⁻²² treats in a special manner of the position and authority of the prophet. According to this law, all forms of divination and magic are to be avoided. The place that the soothsayer and diviner fill among other peoples is in Israel to be taken by the prophet, who is to speak in the name of Yahweh. The true prophet stands in close relation to Yahweh; and, instead of a mere knowledge of the name, which is the avenue to power and influence, he has a deep spiritual insight into the character and mind of God. Because of this ethical and spiritual knowledge of the name of God, he is able to become a great spiritual force among his people.

Consequent upon this advance in spiritual religion, prophet and lawgiver alike forbade any lower kind of prophecy or presumptuous speaking in His name or in the name of other gods.³⁰ Through the work inaugurated by the true line of prophecy, the older conceptions were swallowed up in a new conception. The old order passed away, and it remained only for the period of the exile to complete more fully the emancipation of the mind from all the lingering crudities of the youth of Israel's religious history.

The literature from the period of the exile is especially characterized by its strong assertions of monotheism — Yahweh is Lord of the whole earth. It follows from this that all divination and worship of heathen deities is vanity. Babylon will be overthrown, and her diviners and sorcerers will have no power to prevail, for Yahweh will destroy them.³¹

The Levitical code on this point, as on others, is individual in its precepts. It forbids the individual, on pain of God's direct retribution, to consult wizards or those who have familiar spirits.³² The practice of such arts by man or woman is punishable by stoning to death.³³ The spirit of this legislation is even more severe than that

³⁰ See 2 K. 17¹⁷ 21⁴. 7 23²⁴ Jer. 11²¹ 23²⁵. 27 29⁸. 21. 23 27¹⁵ 44²⁶.

³¹ See Is. 44²⁵ 27¹³ Ez. 13⁶. 7. 23 12²⁴ 21^{26[21]} 22²¹. 28.

³² See Lev. 19³¹ 20⁶.

³³ See Lev. 20²⁷.

of Deuteronomy, and is more directly addressed to the individual. Not only disloyalty in general, but each individual transgression is threatened with severest punishments. It is clear that the Levitical code emphasizes the sin of dishonoring the name of Yahweh.

I Chr. 10^{13, 14} is in harmony with this law in spirit. Saul is condemned, not only for disobedience, but also because he consulted one who had a familiar spirit,³⁴ to inquire of it, and inquired not of the Lord. He is thus guilty of dishonoring God, and of not giving that respect to Him which is due to His great and holy name.

VI.

The Oath.—The oath, in its relation to the third commandment, is of such importance that it demands special treatment.

In Hebrew, two terms are used for the oath: (1) אָלָה (comp. אָלָה = 'to lament, to wail'; Gesenius, *Thesaurus*, makes it akin to אָלָה), lit. 'an invocation of woe upon oneself,' hence, 'an oath with an imprecation.' (2) שְׁבוּעָה (root שָׁבַע 'to be sevened'), which is usually interpreted to mean 'a declaration confirmed by seven victims,' or 'made before seven witnesses.' Both words are used frequently in the sense of 'oath.' The Septuagint has ὄρκος, Vulgate, *juramentum* or *jusjurandum*. When used of a curse, ἀπά and *maledictio* are the translations.

The oath existed among all primitive peoples. The definition given by Cicero seems to be correct: "It is an affirmation with a religious sanction."³⁵ It seems originally to have been of the same nature as the ordeal, and to have arisen from the conception that man, by certain acts and ceremonies, can compel the interference of the Divine to establish innocence or to detect guilt.³⁶ So in the case of the oath, vengeance is imprecated upon falsehood, and punishment is believed to be certain in case of its violation.³⁷ The appeal is made to that which is most highly revered or feared, and, consequently, this appeal changes with changing religious conceptions. In an age of spirit-worship we find oaths taken in the names of spirits, often those of the lower world, which are most feared. The oath is among the earliest religious conceptions with a moral basis. Even in primitive forms of worship spirits are appealed to as vindicators of

³⁴ Compare I Sam. 13¹³ 15²³.

³⁵ See Cicero, *De Officiis*, III. 29.

³⁶ See Brinton, *Primitive Religions*, p. 226.

³⁷ McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopædia*, Vol. VII., art. "Oath."

justice.³⁸ The Greek of an early age swore by the gods of the lower world, and perjury was even then regarded as the most impious of all actions.³⁹

The Hebrew oath seems to look back to an original magical conception of the world. This is seen in the ceremonies which accompany it. Lifting the hand is customary both in oaths and in incantations. Taking hold with the hand of that which is deemed most sacred is common to invocations and to incantations. The power invoked in both cases is called upon by name. אֱלֹהִים signifies 'the invoking of a power,' and calls for an imprecation to rest upon the one who makes the appeal. The root שבע (= to be seavened) doubtless had originally a similar conception, the sacred number seven being employed in magic rites. In Ethiopic, the word from the same root signifies 'enchanter.' Among the ancient Arabs, when they interchanged pledges, blood was shed and smeared on seven stones,⁴⁰ while the gods Orotal and Alilat were invoked.⁴¹

In the early Babylonian religion we find the conception of seven zones of the lower world, and seven gods presiding over these subterranean realms. Whether the appeal in the oath was made originally to these deities we are not able to discover; but that some such conception lay at the basis of the Hebrew oath seems a reasonable inference. Such customs, accordingly, as are referred to in Gen. 21^{22 ff.} seem to be survivals of an early worship of spirits.

From what we have seen, it is clear that the oath in primitive times was closely connected with the general conception of the divine name. In it we meet with a specific application of a far-reaching principle of primitive life and thought.

In general, oaths in the Old Testament may be divided into three classes: (1) A covenant ratified by an oath; e.g. Gen. 26²⁸ 31⁵³ 2 Sam. 21⁷ 2 Kings 11⁴. (2) An appeal to God in attestation of the truth of a statement; e.g. Ex. 22^{10[11]} Gen. 24²⁻⁴ Josh. 6²⁶ 2 Sam. 15²¹ Gen. 50^{5, 25} Josh. 9¹⁵ 2 Sam. 19²³ Josh. 2¹²⁻²¹. (3) The judicial oath.

The appeal in the oath, among the Hebrews, as among other peoples, was made to their supreme deity. As the mention of the name of other deities was forbidden, so they were not to appeal to any other god than Yahweh in testifying by oath.⁴² The oath, from what we have seen, is of the nature of a confession of faith; and so

³⁸ See Tiele, *Gifford Lectures* (1896).

³⁹ Farnell, *Greek Cults*, Vol. I. pp. 47, 69 ff.; *Iliad*, XV. 37.

⁴⁰ See Herodotus, III. 8. ⁴¹ Compare the narrative in Gen. 21^{22, 32}.

⁴² See Josh. 23⁷. Compare with Ex. 23¹³.

swearing by any other god is an acknowledgment of that god. In all cases, therefore, where worshippers of Yahweh are concerned, the appeal is made to the divine under the name of Yahweh⁴³; and only when covenant oaths are made with those outside Israel are other names employed.⁴⁴

To understand more clearly this use of the divine name, we require to examine briefly the different phases of the oath.

1. In the early period of Israel's history, the oath is most frequently found in connection with covenants of friendship.

The *covenant* made with Abraham is regarded as the oath of Yahweh to him.⁴⁵ In this case there does not seem to be any sacrifice, but the name of Yahweh is solemnly invoked in an אָלֹהִים.⁴⁶

In Gen. 21²² ff., the covenant of Abimelech with Abraham at Beer-sheba, we see several primitive customs. Presents are given, as appears to have been usual when covenant relations were entered upon. When the oath is taken, "the⁴⁷ seven lambs" are placed apart (see p. 184). In Gen. 24^{2, 3} we find in connection with the oath several primitive conceptions. Placing the hand under the thigh illustrates the common practice when appealing to the divine, of laying the hand on what is deemed sacred. Laying hold of the horns of the altar is a familiar illustration of the same idea. The act referred to in this passage has special significance in view of the rite of circumcision, which is the outward sign of the covenant. The oath is sworn by the God of the covenant, indicating that all the parties concerned are in covenant relationship, and are bound together by this sacred tie.

Another reference to the oath taken on entering into covenant relations is found in Gen. 26²⁸ ff., in the account of the covenant entered into between Isaac and Abimelech.⁴⁸ They partake of a covenant feast, and next morning the covenant oath is taken. The narrative of Gen. 31⁵³ ff. is similar. After the taking of the oath, there follows a covenant meal, which expresses the covenant relationship.

The phrase כָּרַת בְּרִית (Gr. ῥακία τέμνεσθαι, Lat. *foedus icire*) seems to refer to this covenant oath. The phrase in Greek (see Herod. iv. 70, 71; Hom. *Il.* iv. 155) has the meaning of taking an

⁴³ See Ex. 22¹¹ Gen. 14²² (P) 1 Sam. 24^{21, 22}.

⁴⁴ Gen. 21^{23, 24} (E) 1 Sam. 30¹⁵.

⁴⁵ See Gen. 26³.

⁴⁶ See Dillmann, *Com.* on Gen. 15.

⁴⁷ Gen. 21³⁰, אֵת־שֵׁבַע. Here אֵת marks *determination*. Compare Dillmann, *Com. in loc.*

⁴⁸ The word for 'oath' used in v. 28 is אָלֹהִים, and seems to be taken as equivalent to שְׁבוּעָה, v. 38.

oath, then of making a covenant. The Hebrew words **כָּסַם** and **כָּרַת** seem to have similar radical meaning, *viz.* 'to cut' or 'divide,' and evidently refer back to sacrifice, which accompanied early covenants as well as magical oaths or ordeals. This primitive oath was simply a magical conjuration, a fact that indicates clearly the similarity of the oath to the use of the divine name in general among primitive peoples.⁴⁹

In early society moral obligations were not rigidly felt, and it would appear that the strenuous character of the oath was largely owing to this fact. As already stated, that which was most feared or was most calculated to impress with peculiar emphasis, was brought to bear on the person taking the oath. This is evident in the cases we have just noticed of the use of the oath in covenants. In these cases, just as in early invocations and incantations, ceremonies of a mystic character, such as the sacrificial meal, tended to give more emphasis to the binding character of the transactions. We cannot but notice how prominent a place the covenant oath occupied in this early period of Israel's history, and what a storehouse of primitive ideas is found in the literature which pictures the pre-Mosaic age.

2. Another form of the oath is that in which a private individual appeals to God, to attest the truth of a statement. This is the voluntary oath, a strong asseveration by an appeal to the Divine.

During the period of the kings this form of oath, judging from our sources, was exceedingly common. Asseverations were indulged in on all occasions, and this practice does not seem to have been regarded as particularly open to condemnation. The punishments imprecated upon oneself are not generally expressed, and a thoughtless air and very general lack of reverence characterizes the procedure. It may be that the older conception of the use of the divine name had lost its significance, while the higher and more spiritual conception resulting from the prophetic teaching had not yet become a living reality. Things most sacred are treated with a familiarity which doubtless tended to looseness in the use of the divine name in this special form of the oath.⁵⁰

3. A third form of the oath is that which may properly be designated

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the term **סֶבַע** as to its early magical significance, see Davies, *Magic, Divination, and Demonology*, p. 44 ff.

⁵⁰ See 1 Sam. 20¹⁷. Similar expressions occur eleven times in Samuel and Kings. See also the expressions found in 2 Sam. 12⁵, "as the Lord liveth"; 2 Sam. 14¹¹ 1 K. 1²⁹ 2²⁴ 18¹⁰. Compare 2 Sam. 15²¹ 1 K. 19² 1 K. 20¹⁰ 1 Sam. 1²⁶ and many similar expressions.

as the judicial oath. The book of the Covenant (Ex. 22⁶⁻¹²) gives an illustration of this kind of oath. In all such cases the parties concerned come before the judges,⁵¹ who administer justice in the name of God (v.¹¹). From the form of the expression used it is evident that the oath in this case was administered at special places where God made Himself known, and thus the parties were brought into such sacred relations that the oath took on a most solemn and sacred character.

The passage in 1 Kings 8³¹ is similar in significance. The oath is peculiarly sacred as being taken in Yahweh's temple, at His altar, where His name is (v.²⁰) (comp. 2 K. 11⁴). Here the temple takes the place of the early sanctuary, but the idea is the same. It would seem that something of the nature of the ordeal was still present in such oaths (see 1 K. 8³²). The old forms remain while the thought has passed beyond the early, crude, material conceptions.⁵²

The law of Deuteronomy, and the prophets from Amos to Jeremiah, regard the oath from their own exalted view of the divine name and character. They are pronounced against the abuse of the oath of Yahweh, which clearly demonstrates, they declare, a lack of true reverence among the people. By taking the oath of Yahweh they profess to be His, but they are lacking in the qualities of character which are demanded of those who would so use His name. The whole nation is guilty of perjury. They have violated the third commandment because of this *hypocritical* use of the name of Yahweh.⁵³

The passage that gives the key to the later post-exilic conception of the oath is Lev. 19¹²: "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, so that thou *profane* the name of thy God; I am the Lord."

The false oath is condemned because it is a *profaning* of the holy name of Yahweh.

It is evident from our survey that our position is correct — that throughout its whole history the oath was but a specific use of the divine name. The fundamental thought in the oath was the same as in the more general conception of the name.

In the foregoing pages an effort has been made to study the third commandment from the historic and the comparative points of view.

⁵¹ אֱלֹהִים here is best understood as referring to the judges who give decisions as from Yahweh.

⁵² Compare this form of the oath with the Arabic conception, as found in the story told in Bokhâri, 4, 219 ff.

⁵³ See such passages as Amos 8¹⁵ Hos. 4¹⁵ 10⁴ Zeph. 1⁵ Jer. 4² 5². 7 7⁹ 12¹⁶.

The following propositions may be presented as the results of this discussion :

I. The history of the interpretation of this commandment reveals three distinct renderings, which result from different interpretations of the Hebrew word **שֵׁם** : (a) Thou shalt not utter the name of Yahweh, thy God, for a bad or malicious purpose, etc. ; (b) . . . in vain, thoughtlessly, *profanely* ; (c) . . . *for falsehood*.

II. An inductive study of the word **שֵׁם** reveals apparently an early and a later signification of the word ; the earlier corresponding to *a* in the previous paragraph, the later to *b*, while a more specific meaning in reference to witness-bearing corresponds to *c*.

III. A comparative study of conceptions regarding the divine name among early peoples reveals the universal fact that there was, in accordance with primitive realistic conceptions, a proper use of the divine name permitted to the worshipper, for good and beneficial purposes, while any *abuse* of the name, for bad or malicious purposes, was strongly condemned.

IV. An historical study of the phrase "name of Yahweh" (**שֵׁם יְהוָה**) in the Old Testament shows a conception of the divine name similar to that among outside peoples, but differing as the Hebrew idea of God differed from that of other peoples, and developing with the growing spiritual conceptions of the character and nature of God.

V. The Old Testament, in legislation and prophecy, discloses a permitted use of the divine name, while any unlawful use is sternly prohibited. Such use and abuse change ever in adaptation to the necessities of the age, and in harmony with a growing spirituality in the conception of God.

VI. The oath, in its origin, connects itself with the general primitive conception of the use and the abuse of the divine name ; and, in the Old Testament, comes under the scope of the prohibition of the third commandment as a specific use of the divine name.

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